



KING COUNTY RESPONDS

GOVERNANCE REFORM PROGRESS REPORT

Fall 2005

An Independent Evaluation of King County's Response to Citizen Recommendations
Commission on Governance (2004)
Budget Advisory Task Force (2003)

Independent Evaluation conducted by Lund Consulting Inc., Management and Communications
April – July 2005

KING COUNTY GOVERNANCE REFORM PROGRESS REPORT FALL 2005

This report responds to the recommendations advanced by two citizen task forces between 2003 and 2004. These citizens volunteered their time to help King County respond to a fiscal crisis brought about by major changes in government finance, the economy, and a shifting of resources and responsibilities as a result of federal and state action as well as local annexations and incorporations.

These task forces were called the Commission on Governance (COG) and the Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF). The Commission on Governance was a bi-partisan commission established by the County Council with unanimous approval.

Together, these citizens made 130 recommendations for changes in how King County does business. By the summer of 2005, King County had taken decisive action to implement these recommendations, almost in their entirety.

Leadership in the area of these reforms is especially evident in the follow-through demonstrated with the Criminal Justice, Health and Human Services, and Parks System. Additionally, administrative and budget actions have been undertaken that directly respond to identified reforms. The county has made great strides in realigning the way business is conducted by undertaking benchmarking, using operational master plans by county agencies to identify efficiencies and effective collaborations and initiatives, using business plans to implement reforms and evaluating progress through performance measures. The County Auditor, Council, and Executive have all contributed to changing King County to a culture that is using innovative business tools and one that embraces reforms.

Collaboration and technology are critical components of the County's success at reforms. Model collaborations like the Criminal Justice Council have brought together representatives of the entire spectrum of the criminal justice system. By working collaboratively, positive results like a 20% reduction in the jail population have occurred.

Technology can be expensive on the front end but it can also revolutionize how business is done and bring about cost savings over time. A paper-dominated world such as King County has millions of records from the courts, property roles, zoning, development, election, health, the jail, and the Sheriff to convert to electronic recordkeeping. King County is undertaking a massive conversion of its information systems that is compounded in difficulty due to the merger between King County and Metro that brought under one roof different management and accounting systems. The reforms recommended by the citizen task forces to invest in technology are underway.

Technology has already changed how King County communicates with its citizens. King County's web site includes up-to-the-minute information about every King County program, elected official, and the county's roles and responsibilities.

Visit: www.metrokc.gov

Additionally, King County's cable television station includes daily programs with information about county programs, current policy issues, and it also broadcasts public meetings of the Council, Executive press conferences, and public meetings by boards and commissions.

The cable TV channels are Comcast Cable 22 or Millennium Digital Cable 72 or 80.

One area of reform that has proven difficult to achieve is to change state policy and provide incentives to cities to accept financial responsibilities when they annex or incorporate county areas. King County is committed to making progress in this area and between the Executive and Council, the county has consistently advocated for the necessary reforms. The county has sought assistance from the state and the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development responded with a study that identifies the barriers to annexations that must be overcome.

Some of the citizen reforms relate to King County's form of government and the current variety of county-elected positions. The Charter Review Commission that will begin its work in 2006 is the appropriate forum for addressing these recommendations.

BACKGROUND

In November 2002, King County Executive Ron Sims commissioned a citizen task force to help chart a future for King County in the face of multi-million dollar general fund budget shortfalls. This task force, The Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF), made 39 recommendations in June 2003 in several policy areas with the goal of guiding County leaders in managing the budget crisis.

Overlapping with the recommendations of the BATF, the County Council commissioned a citizen Commission on Governance in March 2003 to consider how services should be provided by King County, given its fiscal challenges. The Governance Commission addressed funding and governance. They issued 91 recommendations in March 2004.

The purpose of this report is to review the recommendations of both citizen efforts and to assess King County's responsiveness to those recommendations.

This report groups the recommendations from both citizen groups together under the following functional areas:

Budget and Finance
Employment
Executive Administration & Service Delivery
Criminal Justice
Human Services & Public Health
Courts
Parks
Growth Management & Annexations
Governance Reform

King County retained Lund Consulting Inc. to research the status of these recommendations and to report findings about progress. These findings are listed in detail on the following pages.

Recommendation Number	Budget & Finance	Status
COG a21	Pursue biennial budgeting.	A voter approved charter amendment approved in 2003 will allow the county to pursue biennial budgeting. The county undertook a pilot biennial budget with the Wastewater Division in an effort to evaluate the systemic changes necessary to implement a county-wide budget process change. The move toward a biennial budget will be facilitated by the implementation of a new accounting system. The "Accountable Business Transformation" initiative is a system technology overhaul for the county that will include consolidation of accounting systems among other systems.
COG a31	Avoid further creation of dedicated funds for services.	The county is eliminating duplicative dedicated funds such as the Criminal Justice Fund in order to increase transparency and accountability. This is an effective way to simplify the accounting structure. There are, however, sometimes reasons to retain a dedicated fund for the purpose of transparency with the public. The recently approved parks levy is an example of establishing a separate fund for transparency. Those voter-approved funds are in a new dedicated account where expenditures can be clearly reported.
COG a32	Seek direct federal funding, not passed-through state, to avoid state administrative costs.	Federal programs in large measure are designed to pass-through the state. Changing this requires a federal legislative that would involve local governments and states throughout the country. King County through the National Association of Counties works to find efficiencies in partnership with other counties.
COG h9	Develop a comprehensive, ongoing public educational effort and tax payer's bill of rights to make the budget and financial systems of the County as transparent as possible.	The County Council conducts public hearings throughout the county as it develops the budget. In addition, the county increasingly uses information technology such as its web site and television station to communicate with its citizens.

Recommendation Number	Budget & Finance	Status
COG h1	Obtain public input about county role in economic development; regional transportation; airport; Boundary Review Board; Animal Control, King County Fair, and Emergency Medical Services.	Stakeholder groups are routinely involved in the decision-process for the county's role in services such as those listed in this recommendation. King County sponsors over 50 citizen boards, commissions, and task forces. These citizen groups are an important part of the process to inform the public and involve the public in policy setting and implementation. For example, in the area of regional transportation, there are well-organized community organizations in south, east, and north King County to offer input on priority setting and investment. These groups are known as the South County Area Transportation Board (SCATBd); the Seattle Shoreline Transportation Board (SeaShore) representing north King County, and the Eastside Transportation Partnership.
COG h4	Establish a regional government-funding plan including an assessment of the structural financial challenges, prioritize services, and identify services if additional funding were available.	The county budget process is a regional government-funding plan that includes these elements. In addition, the use of benchmarks, operational master plans, business plans, and performance measures are all providing data for prioritization.
COG a29	Seek full-cost recovery in contracts and fee-setting. Pursue grants from state, federal government and private foundations. Seek additional fee setting authority and fiscal support from the State.	All of the revenue generating methods recommended are pursued by King County. Full cost recovery is County policy for contracts. Grants are pursued from all sources with attention to the long-term fiscal impacts as described above. During the 2005 state legislative session, the county succeeded in obtaining authority to raise Superior Court filing and recording fees. In addition to these fees, the county obtained authority to increase local filing fees to fund the law library. In the transportation area, counties will receive 1/2 cent of the new gas tax, to be phased-in over two years. This is estimated to yield \$783,000, in 2005, and approximately \$1.5 million each year, beginning in 2006.

Recommendation Number	Budget & Finance	Status
BATF 9	Aggressively oppose additional state unfunded mandates.	King County aggressively fights unfunded mandates through its legislative agenda for state action. A recent example of success is that King County joined with other service providers in the 2005 state legislative session to receive \$80 million in state funds for the county to help offset the \$82 million in federal cuts to Medicaid funding for mental health services. These funds helped to avert a mental health crisis as a result of the federal service cuts.
BATF 3	Continue to use restraint in initiating new services and programs.	New initiatives are aimed at increasing efficiency and reducing costs.
BATF 4	Consider long-term fiscal impacts of decision: exercise restraint in expending one-time savings or revenues.	Grants for program and agency support are an example of an area where King County works to avoid unintended consequences of negative long-term fiscal impacts. An example is the case of grant support for on-going services such as transit operations. It is not prudent to rely on unreliable funding sources such as grants to fund services that are required to continue every year. When the grants are not renewed, service cuts occur disrupting service to King County residents. Sometimes one-time start-up costs are necessary in order to achieve long-term efficiencies. The implementation of new technology is an example of this situation.
BATF 5	Determine impact of discretionary contracts on overhead.	King County does assess overhead in all contracts it enters. Examples include roads and Sheriff services contracts with local governments.
BATF 1	Ensure discretionary contract services are full cost recovery, including capital, operations, and overhead.	King County's current policy is to achieve full-cost recovery through service contracts. Two examples are contracts for Sheriff services and for roads. This policy is backed-up by Council budget provisos and is enforced by the Executive.
BATF d3	Secure full cost recovery on all contracts.	County policy is in effect to achieve this recommendation.
BATF d4	Impose fee increases where possible to avoid further service cuts.	Building permits and parks services are two areas where the county has increased fees to avoid service cuts. In the building field, fees tend to be cyclical, just as the building industry is cyclical.

Recommendation Number	Budget & Finance	Status
BATF b3	Provide greater transparency in presenting the budget and operating policies.	The budget includes an executive summary, published business plans, and performance measures. All of these tools contribute to <u>creating greater transparency and demonstrate accountability.</u>
BATF d1	Provide better public information about the County's roles and revenues.	King County is using new technology such as its web site and television station to provide public information. Following the 2004 election, a direct mail drive was used to encourage citizens to access important records on the web, and also provided contact telephone numbers. Citizens are reluctant to see the county spend scarce resources on expensive mediums such as direct mail and newspaper ads, so these tools are used in exceptional <u>situations or where mandated by law.</u>
BATF d2	Include a concise statement of the fiscal vision for the next several years in the annual budget.	The county includes a budget message and fiscal vision as part of the annual budget books. The Executive Summary is a concise description of this vision. Both are available on the county web <u>site.</u>
BATF d17	Allow counties to set public records and license fees at levels that will more closely approximate the full cost of service.	King County's legislative agenda has included requests for state authority to raise fees. Some additional fee authority was granted for District Court fees. Superior Court fees were not authorized but planning is underway to re-approach the legislature with this request.
BATF d5	Aggressively pursue grant opportunities.	County agencies are pursuing grants for services previously provided by local government. This is especially true in the areas of human services and parks and recreation. This approach is tempered by the risk described above that grant funding is not intended to provide a permanent revenue stream and therefore will inevitably need to be replaced by other funding, or the service will need to be cut. In addition, local governments now competing for grants in the foundation sector are placing a greater burden on non-profits that have traditionally relied on foundation funding <u>sources.</u>

Recommendation Number	Administrative	Status
COG 1	Changes in employment policy could result in savings to help with short-term Current Expense Fund shortfall.	King County's workforce is predominately represented by unions, 87%. The best opportunity to change policy is through contract negotiations. One example of a successful negotiations was the initiative to reduce health care benefits cost increases by moving to a point of service cost share approach. This initiative is called, "Healthy Incentives."
COG 3	Explore employee contribution to health care premiums.	King County identified "point of service cost sharing" as a more effective cost saving measure than contributions to premiums. Studies show that point of service cost sharing generates positive consumer behavior.
COG 22	Negotiate agreements between managers of the Current Expense fund and other agencies through performance measurement and service-level agreements.	The 2006 Budget process will include the use of benchmarks. Agencies are preparing business plans and identifying performance measures for internal management as well as outputs for public accountability.
COG 2	Replicate Wastewater Division productivity initiative in other departments.	The Wastewater Division productivity initiative allowed a gain sharing program where employees could share in savings from cost cutting solutions. Expansion of this initiative would require labor support.
COG 4	Explore detailed benchmark analysis of wages and benefits.	King County recently completed its review of comparable work classes. The County reconciled all positions from the time of the merger between King County and METRO. King County benchmarks with nine governments for comparable wages. The County Auditor completed a report on comparable benefits. The special study analyzed the county's health care costs in light of national and local trends, research cost-saving best practices, and reviewed alternative benefits coverage and employer-employee cost-sharing approaches.

Recommendation Number	Administrative	Status
COG 24	Use outcome based benchmarks to measure performance through all County agencies, including elected officials.	The King County Auditor established a Performance Measurement Work group to advance performance measurement in King County. Representatives from the Executive, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and council staff participated in the work group. During 2005, efforts were expanded to include other elected officials such as the Sheriff's office, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Department of Assessments, District Court, and Superior Court. Visit the King County website for up to date reports on the benchmark effort. www.metrokc.gov/budget/benchmrk/bench04/index.htm
COG 20	Eliminate duplication; reward efficient service delivery, increase productivity; improve transparency of budget, financial, and operating policies; simplify, unify, and streamline fragmented management systems; place high priority on investing in central systems technology; collaborate with other governments and streamline internal processes.	The Accountable Business Transformation (ABT) Implementation Plan is the central process designed to achieve the list of recommendations noted here. The vision for this effort was adopted in King County Council Motion No. 11729: "King County's financial, human resource and budget management functions are fully integrated, efficient and effective, and enhance the county's ability to provide essential services to its customers." Specifically, the county has joined with the City of Seattle and the State of Washington to take advantage of group buying and shared services opportunities. Examples include sharing databases, cell-phone group buying, and use of the state procurement system.
COG 25	Develop and maintain "OMP's" linked to their operations, performance and budgets.	County departments are creating operational master plans. Models include "Adult Justice Operational Master Plan" and "Adult Detention Operational Master Plan." Other operational master plans are in various stages of completion with the Sheriff's Office, the Superior Court, and Public Health. These plans provide for a systematic review of services and are useful in identifying efficiencies and improving effectiveness.
COG 26	Centralize internal service function in a single countywide office of management and budget.	Internal service functions are scheduled to be retained by Executive Administration.
COG 23	Expedite technology strategic planing process and funding for system unification.	The Accountable Business Transformation (ABT) initiative is a proposal by the County Executive that is now being reviewed by the Council that would implement this recommendation.

Recommendation Number	Administrative	Status
BATF b12	Advocate for greater flexibility in the labor area such as binding arbitration.	King County regularly looks for ways to be creative and to allow employees to demonstrate initiative. The WasteWater Division productivity initiative that allowed employees to share in cost savings is an example. The county has extended interest arbitration to all of the appropriate bargaining units as allowed under state and federal law.
BATF b5	Invest in central systems.	The ABT described above is the focus of investment in central systems. When King County and Metro merged, different accounting, budgeting, and personnel systems were brought within one entity. The process of integrating those systems is complicated and expensive. New technology provided the opportunity to make wholesale changes in how these systems work with the unified Metro-King County. The ABT defines a vision, goals and implementation strategy. Funding implementation in phases is now underway.
BATF 6	Give basic service functions of government records, elections, and property assessment-the necessary resources to operate in a highly reliable manner.	Each of these paper-record-keeping areas is going through the process of updating-record keeping with new technology. In the area of elections, several citizen panels have recommended additional steps to increase reliability as a result of recent problems identified during the 2004 Washington State Governor's race. The Council is considering the Executive's request at the time of writing this report for some of these improvements to the Elections Division. During the regular budget process, these investments are being made in a phased approach.
BATF b1	Create a stronger culture of efficiency within the organization.	Business plans and performance measures are two key tools being used throughout the County to increase the culture of efficiency.
BATF b4	Streamline, simplify and standardize operations, practices, and policies.	The ABT described above is a key component of implementing this recommendation. A specific example is the Human Resources Unification project. This project addresses three inter-related elements: structure, process, and culture.

Recommendation Number	Administrative	Status
BATF b6	Secure efficiencies through new methods of service delivery: first seek employee ideas and actions; if necessary, contract out services to other governments or to the private sector. This could include amending the County Charter and labor policies. This could also include reverse contracting for services.	New service delivery options are explored and are being implemented by county agencies that are undertaking operational master plans. Examples exist in the areas of Parks, Health and Human Services, and Criminal Justice. State law limits contracting-out services traditionally provided by county employees.
COG a20	Collaborate with other governments.	Examples of collaboration with other governments are listed above with recommendation #20. In addition, the operational master plans for Adult Justice and Detention have resulted in innovative collaborations. The Criminal Justice Council provides a forum for judges, prosecuting attorneys, the Sheriff, the courts, Health and Human Services, and jail health staff to work together to address system-wide issues and needs.

Recommendation Number	Criminal Justice	Status
COG a5	Conduct cost and span of control study about level of service in criminal justice departments.	The Adult Justice Operational Master Plan includes a systematic review to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The first area of reform was the management of the jail population. Since 2000, the jail population has been reduced by 20%. This is 36% below projections.
COG a7	Conduct analysis of employment drivers in the criminal justice system such as arrests, bookings, and filings.	The Adult Detention Operational Master Plan reports data from arrests and bookings and examines the drivers of arrests and bookings. The Courts and the Human Services Division have taken an in-depth review of these drivers through the Criminal Justice Initiative. Two major components identified include stable housing and eligibility for Medicaid. These factors relate to breaking the cycle of crime by stabilizing the lives of offenders. The outcome is restoring productive citizens and reducing jail population. These initiatives and plans include built-in on-going evaluation and focus on outcomes.
COG a8	Take measures to efficiently use jail services by ensuring that mental health and substance abuse treatment services have sufficient funding.	Approximately \$2 million, of the \$6 million saved through increased jail efficiency has been earmarked for the Criminal Justice Initiative that addresses these areas. In addition, improvements in jail health management are underway including technology upgrades of medical records that will improve efficiency over time.
COG a9	Seek state funding support for mandatory law and justice costs.	During the 2003-04 state legislative sessions, King County did apply for and receive state funding to assist with the extraordinary costs of the Ridgeway trial, for example. In the 2005 Session, increased court fees were authorized by the Legislature that will provide additional revenue.
COG a10	Take measures to permit booking of nonviolent offenders without incarceration. Develop capacity for community-based housing and treatment for low-level non-violent offenders. Forge interlocal agreement with regional police services. Establish interlocal agreements related to transportation of prisoners.	The Division of Community Corrections is making progress in creating alternatives to incarceration. This progress can be measured by the reduction of the jail population by 20%, during a time-period when crime statistics have not changed. The Intake Services Unit maintains public safety while working with judges to speed the court process.

Recommendation Number	Criminal Justice	Status
COG a11	Establish benchmarks for budget and staff reductions linked to jail's average daily population levels. Conduct outcome evaluations of all offender service programs for performance and cost and devote resources to those programs with both cost-beneficial and with positive effects on recidivism.	Full-time equivalents (FTE's) in the jail are tied to jail population. This is part of the Adult Detention Operational Master Plan. As noted above, the Adult Justice and Adult Detention Operational Master Plans provide benchmarks and evaluation.
COG a12	Expand pilot programs offering alternatives to incarceration.	The Community Corrections program began as a pilot program and has proven its effectiveness. What began as a program serving 100 clients, now serves, 8,500 clients.
COG a13	Invest in mental health, drug and alcohol treatment services and case management. Seek additional state funds or devote more County funds.	King County through Ordinance 13629 has adopted policies to guide human service policy. Among the policies are priorities for the use of general county funds and outside funding from the federal government, the state, and other service providers. The County policies recognize that those afflicted with these illnesses may end-up in the criminal justice system if they are not treated.
COG a14	Increase frequency of first-appearance court calendars to move those booked who can safely be released pre-trial out of the jail.	As noted above in recommendation #10, the Intake Services Unit is working with the courts to streamline these processes while ensuring public safety.
COG a15	Explore aggressive court calendar management to minimize jail days.	This recommendation is being addressed in the implementation phase of the Adult Justice Operational Master Plan.
COG a18	Emphasize public education about the benefits of providing treatment, intervention and supportive services.	The Juvenile Justice Master Plan has proven effective in reducing juvenile involvement in crime and the criminal justice system with both savings in detention and court-related costs. This was achieved through partnerships involving coordinated planning, implementation, and evaluation of a variety of service initiatives connecting criminal justice and human services.

Recommendation Number	Criminal Justice	Status
COG b2	Establish criteria to permit booking of non-violent offenders without incarceration. See recommendations 10 & 11.	The Intake Services Unit initiated enhanced screening of identified offenders soon after booking into jail. The goal is to provide pertinent criminal justice agencies with enhanced relevant information as soon as possible in the adjudication process to allow appropriate release, detain or alternative program placement decisions, while maintaining public safety and being cost conscious. This enhanced screening process is scheduled for assessment in July 2005.
BATF b2	Implement additional efficiencies and controls in the law, safety and justice arena, through proactive work of the Criminal Justice Council.	See recommendations above related to the Adult Justice and Adult Detention Operational Master Plans.
BATF 8	Reduce the jail healthcare budget	The Wellcon Report commissioned by King County encompasses Risk Management, Cost Containment, Best Practices and NCCHC Accreditation Requirements. The paper medical chart was identified as both high risk and high cost to Public Health and the County. According to Wellcon's findings, "There is no practical or economical way to fix your paper chart library. Your medical record system is the single greatest liability that you have and if you took your current medical practice to court, the current state of your medical record would assist the plaintiff's case for more than it would assist in your defense." Technology upgrades are expected to be completed by the end of 2006.
BATF 10	Consolidate and restructure delivery of specialized police functions.	The Sheriff is examining specialized services and developing a rationale for the basis of these services. One example is the Air Support Policy, regarding the use of police helicopters. King County is contracting with other government agencies such as the US Coast Guard, US Park Service, the State Department of Ecology, and the Seattle Fire Department to off-set helicopter operating costs.
BATF b9	Examine options to reduce facilities costs	Technology is a factor in the remodel of the jail. The remodel will be completed in 2006 and is expected to reduce operating costs.

Recommendation Number	Criminal Justice	Status
BATF b10	Explore detention alternatives	The Division of Community Corrections has initiated programs that are serving as an alternative to detention. The 25% reduction in jail population is a demonstration of effectiveness. King County is one of only two counties in the nation to reduce its jail population in the last three years.
BATF b11	Revise jail employment structures	County managers are encouraged to find creative and effective ways to use staff resources while respecting the constraints of collective bargaining agreements.
BATF d12	Provide some funding support for indigent defense costs.	King County requested funding from the state during the 2005 legislative session, but was not successful.
BATF d15	Provide state funding for a greater share of the extraordinary aggravated murder costs experienced by counties.	During the 2003-04 state legislative sessions, King County did apply for and receive state funding to assist with the extraordinary costs of the Ridgeway trial, for example. In addition, funds were provided to retry approximately 60 murder cases that were required by upper court rulings.
BATF d16	Provide direct state funding to counties for defense costs in dependency and termination cases.	Some state funding is provided.

Recommendation Number	Human Services & Public Health	Status
COG a16	Make investments in prevention and intervention services.	Ordinance 13629 provides the framework for King County's Human Services policies. Implementation and funding priorities are defined. The Task Force on Regional Human Services made further recommendations with details for future action to increase and prioritize funding. Their recommendations are on the King County web site.
COG a17	Reach agreements with the cities about the level of service to be provided in human services, what will be funded and how it will be funded.	The Framework Policies for Human Services described above provide guidance for reaching agreements with cities about service levels and responsibilities.
COG h8	Create a countywide system for providing and funding human services.	See recommendation #16.
COG a19	Produce agreement about the funding and service roles of government for human services that must be paid for regionally.	See recommendation #16. Efforts are on going to refine and set parameters for local and regional roles.
BATF 7	Develop long-term funding plans for human services and parks, clearly delineating regional and local roles.	See recommendation #16. In addition, the Parks Division has followed-up on the recommendations of the Metropolitan Parks Task Force with a Business Transition Plan. These plans address regional and local responsibilities as well as opportunities for new initiatives through private funding and public levy support.
BATF d14	Continue to fund basic public health.	The 2003-05 State Biennium Budget included \$20 million for the Seattle King County Public Health Department. The 2005 state budget included \$80 million in funding to avert a Medicaid crisis in the face of federal Medicaid cuts.

Recommendation Number	Courts	Status
COG b3	Consolidate King County Superior Court and District Court into single trial court.	During the 2004 King County budget process, King County authorized the preparation of an Operational Master Plan and Facilities Master Plan for the King County District Court. The plan is a comprehensive plan that sets forth how the King County District Court is to provide services now and in the future.
COG b4	Encourage agreements between Municipal and District/Superior Courts to release, upon appropriate security, warrants for non-violent offenses issued by other Courts in King County.	See recommendations above related to the Adult Justice and Adult Detention Operational Master Plans.
COG b5	Consider the role of the Municipal Courts and whether they should be consolidated into either a single court of limited jurisdiction or into the Superior Court System.	See District Court Operational Master Plan. The master plan addresses what services, level of service, system efficiencies, and service delivery all within the context of the larger criminal justice system.
COG b4	Seek greater cost sharing for court operations, indigent defense, and complex cases with the State.	King County's legislative agenda included requests to assist with funding the items listed in this recommendation. Some fee increases were authorized, some extraordinary court costs were funded, but funding for indigent defense was not provided to King County.
COG b3	Consolidate Superior Court and District Court Administrative Functions.	See recommendation #5.
BATF d8	Grant counties authority to raise district and superior court fees.	See recommendation #4.
BATF d9	Reduce the state's take from locally generated court fees.	See recommendation #4.
BATF d10	Institute authority to impose Superior Court fees on a per pleading basis.	The Board of Judicial Administration and the Superior Court Judges Association have agreed to work with King County during the summer and fall of 2005 to authorize new fees by the Superior Courts.
BATF d11	Increase direct state support for District and Superior Court.	See recommendation #4.

Recommendation Number	Parks	Status
BATF c5	Advocate for a change in state law that will provide for automatic transfer of local parks and recreation facilities to cities upon annexation.	King County's legislative agenda has consistently included bills to implement this recommendation. State law currently provides for county roads to become the responsibility of cities at the time of annexation or incorporation. In addition, to attempting unsuccessfully to include parks and surface water management under RCW 36.89 or RCW 36.94, King County has sought incentive funding for cities. King County will continue to advocate for state law changes to achieve this recommendation.
BATF d13	Increase legally permissible uses of the Real estate Excise Tax (REET).	King County has attempted without success to obtain state law changes to allow REET funds to fund more than parks capital projects.
BATF d6	Develop a long-term funding plan for parks and human services.	<p>The Metropolitan Parks Task Force, in June 2002, recommended a series of options for stabilizing the funding base for King County Parks and Recreation. The Omnibus Parks Ordinance was passed providing greater flexibility to Parks in generating non-tax revenue and setting user fees, among other changes. County funds are focused on key regional assets such as Marymoor Park, the Fair Grounds, and the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatics Center, not funding parks and pools inside cities.</p> <p>Voters approved a 4-year, 4.9-cent park's levy in May 2003 to support parks, open space and regional trails maintained by King County. The levy revenue is used for maintenance activities in regional and rural parks including maintenance of trails, ball fields, and sports courts; cleaning of bathrooms and litter removal. New user fees, consistent with Task Force recommendations, were effective in January 2003.</p> <p>Parks sponsorship deals have been proposed to both local and national companies. An advertising sales plan is in development. Wireless technology opportunities are being explored to generate revenue and to enhance consumer internet access.</p>

Recommendation Number	Parks	Status
BATF d13	Increase legally permissible uses of the Real estate Excise Tax (REET).	King County has attempted without success to obtain state law changes to allow REET funds to fund more than parks capital projects.

Recommendation Number	Incorporations and Annexations	Status
COG b1	Implement regional finance and governance requirements of the Countywide Planning Policies adopted as part of the state Growth Management Act including: implementation of a system to require annexations or incorporations of unincorporated areas within the urban growth boundary; development of a county-wide system to address regional transportation needs; develop interlocal agreements to provide local services where appropriate and renegotiate union contracts to allow reverse-contracting.	<p>The State Office of Community Trade and Economic Development conducted a study in 2004-05 on the subject of barriers to annexation. King County's 2005 legislative agenda included bills intended to provide new revenue authority with a utility tax in urban unincorporated areas. This bill did not pass. Annexations are currently under consideration in several King County communities.</p> <p>King County's 2005 Budget, available on-line, includes a detailed report on the Annexation Initiative, showing progress, plans, revenue implications and allocation of costs.</p>
COG a30	Keep unincorporated urban areas connected to cities, consistent with the state's Growth management Act.	County policy is consistent with this recommendation. Proposals are in review that would continue to facilitate annexations of urbanizing areas to adjacent cities. Primary upcoming focus is on North highline, Juanita, and Fairwood-Petrovitsky. Cities showing new interest in considering annexation or incorporation include <u>West Hill and Highline/Boulevard Park/White Center</u> .
COG c1	See recommendation A 33, B 1, and if regional agreements fail, then by the end of 2005, the State of Washington should clarify state law related to county services to be provided regionally, including a timeline for the county to divest itself of urban services; and appropriate reallocation of revenue sources consistent with these shifts in responsibility.	The county is committed to a rational and orderly annexation program and is working with the State Department Community Trade and Economic Development to identify incentives and strategies to eliminate the financial impediments to progress.
COG d6	Consider in the long-term if Council size should change with additional annexations and incorporations.	King County voters approved reducing the size of the King County Council from 13 to nine members in the November 2004 general election.
COG h2	Undertake education about county role in providing local and regional services, the value of the services, and the return on investment.	King County is using television and the internet to communicate to a broader audience about its role. King County's cable TV station can be found at Comcast Cable 22 or Millennium Digital Cable 72 or 80. King County's web address is www.metro.kc.gov

Recommendation Number	Incorporations and Annexations	Status
BATF 2	Make budget decisions consistent with the County's Growth Management vision. Budget choices should promote annexation of urban unincorporated areas and reflect a lower service level for rural areas than for urban service levels.	The County Executive and Council provide direction and oversight to ensure the County's Growth Management and annexation policies are applied to budget decisions.
BATF b14	Sponsor best practices forums with other governments in the region.	King County agencies involved in operational master plans, business implementation plans, and benchmarking are engaged with other government agencies in the sponsorship of best practices. This is evidenced by the findings about the recommendations listed above.
BATF c1	Initiate a comprehensive strategy to simultaneously encourage annexation and reduce the urban portion of the local service subsidy.	See recommendation #1.
BATF c2	Identify the basis and targets for cutting from all local service budgets as annexations occur.	The County is assessing savings and costs of annexations. Overhead and administration is being analyzed. Since these recommendations were made no significant annexations have occurred at a scale to generate savings.
BATF c3	Quantify the current rural subsidy and rural service levels- and track them over time.	The Office of Management and Budget works with county agencies to document the cost of services and to track them over time.
BATF d7	Grant urban counties planning under GMA authority to impose councilmanic utility tax in unincorporated areas.	HB-2244 would have allowed King County to enact a 2% county-wide utility tax on all utilities except natural gas and electric. King County worked to partner with cities on this bill. The bill did not pass.
BATF c6	Advocate for changes in law that will streamline the annexation process.	See recommendation #1.
BATF c7	King County and cities should work in the immediate term to refine the annexation strategies.	See recommendation #1.

Recommendation Number	Incorporations and Annexations	Status
BATF c4	Consider seeking legislation to equalize taxing authorities as between cities and unincorporated areas.	See recommendation #1.

Recommendation Number	Governance Structure	Status
COG d3	The Charter Review Commission should give focused examination to the Council-Executive and other forms of government, including appointed County-Manager and Council-Board president forms of government with blended legislative-executive powers.	Every decade, the King County Charter is reviewed by an appointed advisory commission composed of citizens chosen both for their knowledge of government and for how well they reflect the diverse population of the county. The next Charter Review Commission will undertake its work in 2006.
COG a34	Change sheriff's position to become appointive. The elections function should remain appointive.	The County Council is reviewing structural changes to some appointive and elective positions. See also recommendation #3.
COG a35	Retain partisan offices for elected positions of Council, Executive, Assessor, and Prosecutor.	The County Council is reviewing structural changes to some appointive and elective positions. See also recommendation #3.
COG a36	Retain Council size at 13 members.	King County citizens voted to reduce the council size to 9 members at the November 2004 general election. During 2005 new council districts were drawn and in the fall of 2005 council members will be elected for the newly created 9-member council.
COG a37	Council staff salaries and number of employees should be commensurate with the size of the Council.	The annual budget process includes an assessment of work load and responsibilities. The population of the County is expanding and while citizens voted to reduce the number of council districts, the districts are simultaneously being increased in geographic size and by the number of constituents to be served by each Council member.
COG a33	Consider and develop a modern township concept to provide local representation in rural areas for those decisions best made locally.	This recommendation has not been adopted for action by King County at this point in time.
BATF d18	Work with other government associations to jointly develop and advocate legislative agendas.	King County works with the Washington Association of Counties on its legislative agenda. At times the county joins with other associations depending on the legislative issue. For example, the Superior Court Judges Association is part of the legislative effort to obtain Superior Court fees. King County worked with the Washington Cities Association and many other organizations to achieve the successful gas tax increase and allocation to counties.